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DO YOU SEE THIS BOOK?

(TO BE CONTINUED)



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Founder : CHAKRAPANI

LONG LIVE THE CHILD!

Earlier, in the pages of your magazine, you have read the story of Nachiketa. He was a boy who braved into the presence of Yama, the god of death, and questioned him on the mystery of death and the secret of immortality.

You have also read about Aruni, a boy who set an inspiring example of conduct through his devotion to his master.

This issue carries the story, through pictures, of Udanka, yet another brave boy of the era of the Upanishads.


Nachiketa, Aruni and Udanka belong to a remote past. Yet, they are remembered with love and admiration. It is because the virtues they represent—like aspiration, the spirit of sacrifice and the quest for the unknown—are still the qualities which give one's character a true distinction. It cannot be said that the children of today lack in such virtues. The virtues are there in their consciousness. But it is necessary that as they grow up, they should take care to see that their quest, aspiration, and the spirit of sacrifice do not die out. A poet once lamented:

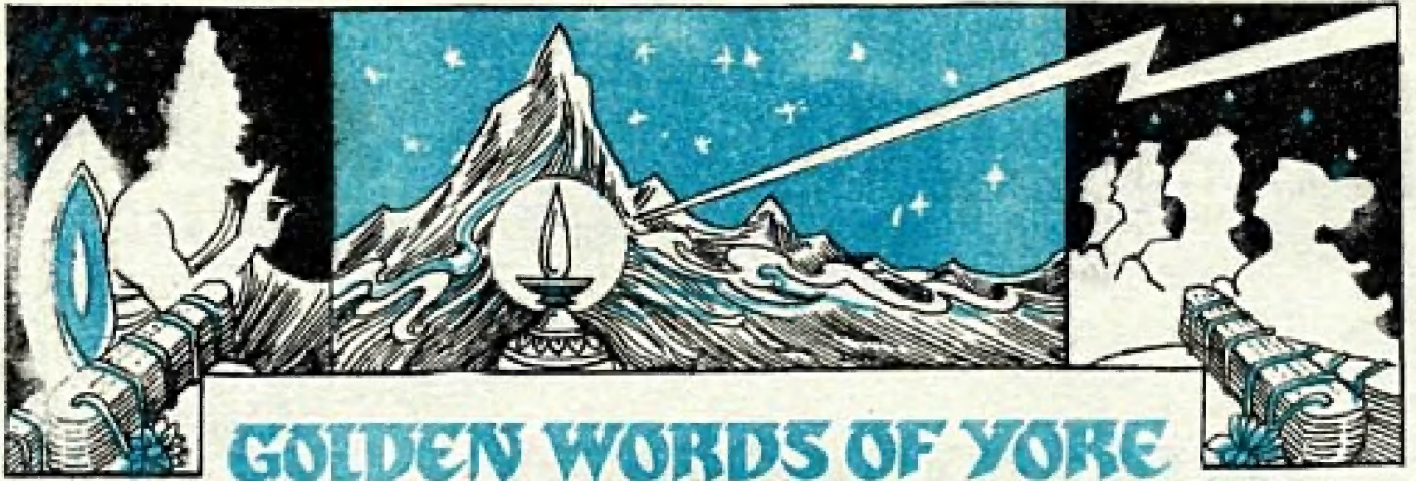
Where do all the loving children go to?

Are the stupid people all they grow to?

No, certainly not. The innocent and aspiring child lives in many a grown-up heart.

And let the child in man live long.





GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

अपराधो न मेऽस्तीति नैतद् विश्वासकारणम् ।
विद्यते हि नृशंसेभ्यो भयं गुणवतामपि ॥

Aparādhō na me'stīti naitad viśvāsakāraṇam
Vidyate hi nṛśaṁsebhyo bhayam guṇavatāmapi

A person should not rest assured that he was safe because he had done no harm to anybody. Even the virtuous has to dread the wicked.

The Hitopadeshah

अप्रियं पुरुषं चापि परद्रोहं परस्त्रियम् ।
अधर्ममनृतं चैव दूरतः प्राज्ञो विवर्जयेत् ॥

Apriyam puruṣam cāpi paradroham parastriyam
Adharmamanṛtam caiva dūrāt prājño vivarjayet.

A wise man keeps himself away from a person he dislikes, from enmity to others, from other's wives, from unrighteous conduct, and from falsehood.

The Samayochita Padyamalika

अर्थनाशं मनस्तापं गृहे दुश्चरितानि च ।
वञ्चनं चापमानं च मतिमान् न प्रकाशयेत् ॥

Arthanāśam manastāpam gr̥he duścariṭāni ca
Vañcanam cāpamānam ca matimān na prakāśayet

A man with a sound sense does not go about speaking of his financial loss, of his agony, of scandal in his family, of his being deceived or of his humiliation.

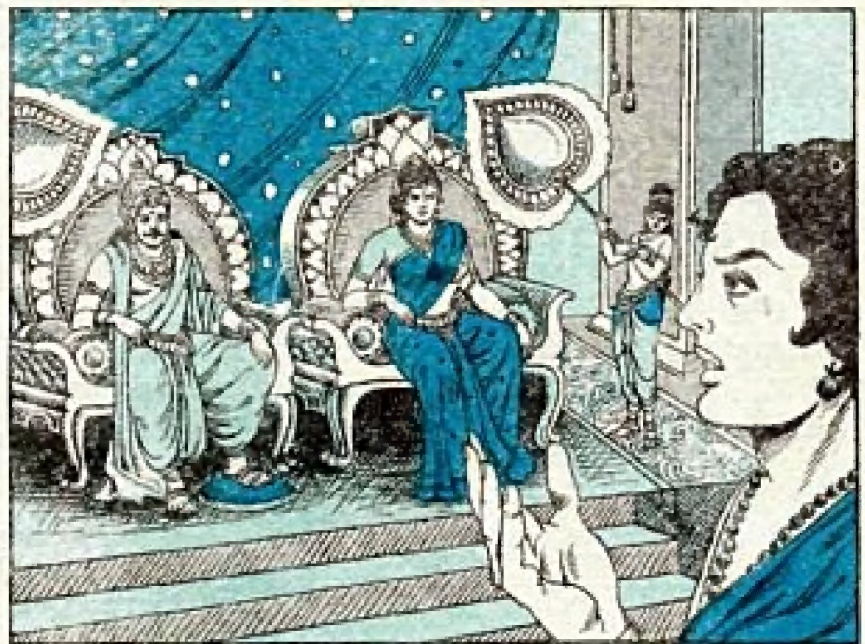
The Hitopadeshah

UDANKA'S ADVENTURE

The Sage Veda had the best of his disciples in Udanka, a young man of great courage and wisdom. Upon the completion of his study, Udanka begged to offer some token gift to his guru. The guru directed Udanka to his wife.



The guru's wife desired Udanka to fetch for her a pair of very special earrings which the queen of King Pousya wore. Udanka met the queen and influenced her to part with the ornaments. But the queen warned him that Takshaka, the King of Snakes, coveted the ornaments.



On his way back to his guru's ashram, Udanka entered a lake for bathing. He had put the ornaments on a slab of stone. Suddenly a naked mendicant picked them up and ran away. Udanka hurried out of the water and gave him a chase.



As Udanka caught hold of the thief, the fellow suddenly turned into a snake and slipped from his hold and slithered into a hole. Udanka realised that the thief was none other than Takshaka.

Udanka at once set himself to digging through the hole in a bid to follow Takshaka to the nether world. But it was a goal impossible to be achieved by mere human hands with a stick as the means!



He prayed to Indra. His prayer was duly heard and Indra employed his weapon, Vajra—the thunder—to do the needful. Vajra struck the ground continuously until a passage into the nether world opened up.



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Udanka reached the deep interior of the earth. There he was acquainted with many a mystery which explained the working of the world. He saw two women weaving a cloth with white and black threads. The women were the Destinies and the white and the black threads were day and night.



He also saw six young men turning a wheel which had twelve spokes. The young men were the six seasons and the twelve wheels were the twelve months.

Before Udanka stood a luminous person with a horse by his side. He was Indra in disguise. Udanka felt that he must be a divine being. He appealed to him with folded hands to help him recover the stolen ornaments.





At the instance of the divine person, the horse began to discharge flames and smoke from its nostrils and mouth. The entire nether world was soon filled with an ominous darkness.

The *nagas*, the snake-residents of the nether world, felt suffocated. Their king, Takshaka, was obliged to return the stolen earrings to Udanka. Udanka returned to earth riding the magic horse.



The wife of Udanka's guru, who intended to wear the earrings on an auspicious day when she was to feed the sages, was growing impatient. But Udanka reached just before the feast and offered the earrings. He fulfilled a mission, in the process, gathering great knowledge.



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LEGENDS AND PARABLES OF INDIA

THE OLD SAGE AND THE FIFTY PRINCESSES

Sauvari was a sage who practised penance in an unusual way. He sat submerged in the water of the river Yamuna and meditated.

One day while he kept his eyes open and was enjoying the play of the aquatic creatures, he saw the king of the fish, whose name was Sumanta, swimming by. Sumanta was surrounded by the members of his family, his children and grandchildren playing and frolicking around him.

Suddenly a desire struck the sage's heart. "It must be a very exciting experience to have children and grandchildren. Why not I too have them?"

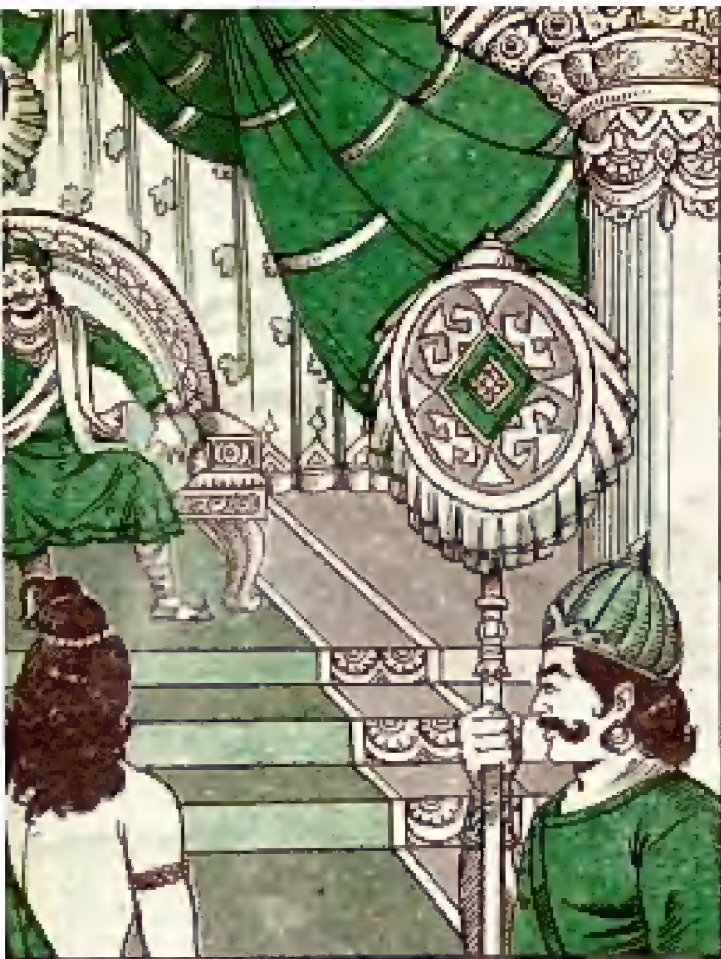
He asked himself.

Before long he was on the bank, walking towards the palace of King Mandhata, a famous ruler.

The sage was duly received by the king. "I am honoured to have you as my guest today," said the king. "I will feel further honoured if I can be of any use to you."

"I am pleased with you, O king. I am here to ask you for the hand of one of your daughters. I have decided to marry and raise a family," said the sage.

It was like a bolt from the blue for the king. No doubt he had a great respect for the



sage. But to marry a princess to him was a different matter altogether! He was very old and age gave him the looks of anything but a bridegroom!

But to refuse the sage point-blank would be to invite danger. Who does not know that the wrath of the sages can do havoc?

An idea came to the king in a flash. He said, "O Sage! I should be proud to have you as my son-in-law. But according to the custom that prevails in our dynasty, the choice of a husband is always left to our daughters themselves!"

The sage had great insight.

He could read the thought of the king. He only smiled.

"In that case, please arrange to present me before your daughters," proposed the sage. "If I am not very unlucky, I should of course be able to find a bride among them."

The king asked a servant to guide the sage into the inner apartments of the palace. He was sure that his daughters would laugh at the old sage and ridicule him for his high hopes. He was awfully anxious about what would happen next.

But something quite contrary to the king's fears was in the offing. As the sage advanced into the palace, he applied a little of his yogic power to himself and turned into an enchanting youth. But it was only the daughters of the king who could see him in his changed personality. Others saw him as the old sage.

The fifty daughters of the king were then playing in the garden. They stopped, surprised, as soon as they saw a young man of exquisite charm appearing amidst them.

"Here is a great sage, Sauvari by name, who has decided to take a wife. Will any of you like to marry him?" the sage's

escort announced.

There was a silence for a moment. Then the eldest princess stepped forward and, blushing, muttered, "I will be proud to have him as my husband!"

Next, what the sage and the escort should see but all the rest of the royal young ladies pressing closer to the sage and expressing in no uncertain terms their readiness to marry him.

Soon one of the princesses fetched a garland and put it around the sage's neck. And all the rest followed suit.

The king stood stunned when reported about the episode in the garden. He had no other go than to arrange the marriage of all his fifty daughters with the sage.

The proud sage led his fifty wives to a solitary region on the Yamuna. There he applied another bit of his yogic power and raised fifty separate mansions, each encircled by orchards and gardens, for his fifty wives.

With the help of even a little more of his yogic power, he gathered a lot of wealth and thereby gave his wives whatever comfort they needed and hired numerous servants for them.

Some time later, King Man-



dhata arrived there to see how his daughters lived. He was at once surprised and delighted at what he saw. He met his eldest daughter first. "Are you all right, child?" he asked.

"Couldn't be better," was her reply. By and by she told him how deeply her husband loved her—so much so that he hardly visited any other wife of his. "At times I feel that I am being selfish in holding up all his love for myself. But what can I do if he does not care for others?" she said, not without some pride.

But the king had to hear the same claim from all the rest

of his daughters. He realised that the sage, by his yogic power, had created the illusion in each one of his wives that he devoted all his attention to her alone!

The king returned happy—as any father would!

Years passed. Sauvari was blessed with a number of children. He brought them up well and when they grew up to be young men and women, he desired to see their offspring. He arranged for their marriage and soon had multitude of grandchildren around him.

One day, at sunset, he was strolling on the bank of the Yamuna, alone. The waters flowed on before his eyes, as the time too flowed on. Suddenly he saw another seer passing by. Sauvari called him. The seer stopped and asked him, "Who

are you?"

"Why! Can't you recognise me? I am Sauvari, the sage!"

The travelling seer laughed. "Don't tell me that. You are an ordinary man. If you were Sauvari, the sage, I should be able to see in you the power of a great yogi!" commented the seer and he went away.

Sauvari stood stupefied. He realised that he had spent all the spiritual power that he had achieved through decades of strenuous askesis for the most ordinary earthly pleasures. He was overwhelmed by a sense of regret and repentance. He must do everything again, from the very beginning.

He crossed the river and walked on. The fifty beautiful mansions stood behind. He never looked back.



BUDDHA-The Enlightened One

This was more than 2,500 years ago. The garden-palace of the King of Kapilavastu, at Lumbini, wore a festive look. The queen of King Suddhodana, Maya Devi, had just given birth to a son—the king's first child.

Innumerable people were being fed. Gifts were being bestowed on the deserving and alms were being given to the needy.

But the king remained closeted with seven renowned astrologers who were busy studying the child's horoscope.

"O King, your son has a great destiny to live through. He will become either the king of kings or one who would show the humanity the path of truth," exclaimed six astrologers.

"Why are you silent?" the king asked the seventh one.

"It is clear to me that there is only one future for the child. He will be the path-finder towards truth. He will found a new order of religion," was the seventh astrologer's answer.

The king was happy to know that his son would be

great; at the same time he grew anxious to forestall the possibility of his son turning away from the world.

Siddhartha, as the prince was named, grew up in the royal palace at Kapilavastu, a small but beautiful city. His mother died on the seventh day after his birth. But his stepmother, who was his mother's own sister, gave him all the love of a true mother.

As he grew up, he showed great eagerness for gathering knowledge. He learnt everything that was possible to learn within the compass of the palace. His father would never allow him to go out. If he would, he would first ensure that the prince never saw any sorrowful sight on his way.

The young Siddhartha was married to a princess of exquisite beauty, Yasodhara. The king built three magnificent castles for the young couple—to live through three major seasons of the year.

But even then he could not undo the inevitable. One day, as Siddhartha proceeded to a

park riding a chariot, he saw an old man in the crowd that had lined the street to have a look at their prince.

"What sort of man is this, who has no teeth, whose hair are all white and who can hardly stand steady?" he asked his dear attendant, Channa, who was driving the chariot.

"Age has reduced him to this condition, my lord as it would do to all of us," replied Channa.

Siddhartha looked pensive. If this is the future of the body, how can it be sensible to be proud of one's youth and beauty? He wondered.

A few days passed. The prince was on his way to the park again. There was a crowd on the way, cheering him. Siddhartha returned their greetings, but his eyes were focused on a man who looked extremely pale and stood shivering.

"What kind of man is this whose face is without any joy and who cannot stand steady even though he is not old?" the prince asked Channa.

"He is a sick man, my lord, beset with some disease. Anybody can fall sick any moment," replied Channa.

Siddhartha turned gloomy. What glory is there in living

if man was so uncertain of his own health and happiness? he wondered.

A few days later, the prince was again on his way to the park. This time he saw what was a strange sight for him. A man lay immobile on a stretcher borne by four men and followed by some more who were weeping and wailing.

"What is the matter with that man carried by others?" he asked.

"My lord! It is a dead body. It is being carried to the cremation ground where it would be reduced to ashes," answered Channa and he explained at some length what is death and how it must visit all.

Siddhartha got immersed in thought. If this is the end of all, what is the meaning of life?

Slowly it occurred to him that life must have some greater purpose. There must be a goal to reach.

As he was brooding over such thoughts, on yet another visit to the park, he happened to see an ascetic who looked quite care-free. Channa told him that the ascetic was one who had snapped all links with the world and fixed his mind on God alone. Sorrow and suffe-

ring did not touch him; in any case, he did not care for them.

Siddhartha was impressed. At last here was a clue to true happiness. Hardly could the pleasures of life give him any satisfaction after this. And when the joyous news that he had been blessed with a son was broken to him, he only muttered that it was yet another bondage for him.

But no bondage could prove strong enough for the awakened spirit of Siddhartha. At midnight, when the princess Yasodhara was fast asleep with the charming babe by her side and the whole palace had fallen quiet, Siddhartha sneaked out

of the house, followed by Channa.

He rode his pet horse, Kanthaka and crossed the city, still followed by the faithful Channa. On the bank of a river he stopped. He put off his royal robe and the ornaments and handed them over to Channa. With the sword, he then cut off his long hair and scattered them in the wind.

"Now, ride back to my father's palace," he instructed Channa. But Kanthaka, the horse, who realised what his master was doing, fell down, dead!

Siddhartha walked on and on. He reached the abode of a





mented his body in several ways in the way of penance.

A group of five mendicants who were looking for an able guru happened to see him. They could feel that he was great soul, on the way to high spiritual realisations. They accepted him as their guru and began to serve him.

Siddhartha, however, was still experimenting with different ways of askesis. After a while he felt that tormenting oneself was not the way to truth. He began taking food. The five mendicants thought that their guru had abandoned the spiritual path. They deserted him.

But Siddhartha knew that enlightenment was coming to him. He hardly cared what others thought of him. And before long he got the light he sought. He realised how to free oneself from the bondage to ignorance, how to achieve salvation. He became the Buddha—the enlightened one.

But for Buddha it was not enough to know the path of salvation for himself. He must show the path to others. Immensely compassionate that he was, first he went in search of the very five disciples who had deserted him. He met them in

wise teacher named Alara Kalama and lived with him. When there was nothing more to learn from the old teacher, Siddhartha went over to another learned man, Uddaka Ramaputta, and learnt from him whatever the learned man had to teach.

Thereafter began months of wandering. One day he reached a beautiful park at Uruvela, a town in the kingdom of Magadha. There he sat down under a tree, on the bank of a river and got immersed in a severe form of meditation. He ate little or nothing and was reduced to skeleton. A long time passed during which he tor-

a park near Varanasi. They could feel his greatness as soon as they saw him. They became the first batch of his disciples—Buddhists.

Buddha told them to avoid the two extreme ways of either indulging in comfort or tormenting oneself with misery. The middle path—neither to be attached to comfort nor to welcome suffering—was the right path for the seeker. And the middle path was made up of eight virtues: right thinking, right motive, right speech, right action, right way of livelihood, right kind of efforts, right mindfulness and right concentration.

By and by Buddha explained that at the root of all sorrows and suffering was the evil of desire. By rising above desire, one could find the way to the ultimate salvation.

Slowly but steadily seekers flocked to him. Whosoever once saw him and heard him felt greatly attracted to him. Those who came to him leaving everything were accepted as ascetic disciples or monks. Those who accepted his doctrine, but could not leave their homes, were also recognised by him as his householder disciples.

Buddha returned to Uruvela.



On his way he met a group of thirty wealthy youths. They had gone for a picnic in a garden. A dancing girl whom they had hired had escaped with their costly belongings. They were pursuing her.

Buddha put a simple question to them: "What is better for you—to go in search of a woman or to go in search of yourselves?"

The question itself clinched the issue. The youths followed him and turned his disciples. This was the simple but marvellous manner in which Buddha inspired the thirst for truth in numerous hearts. To give another instance of his method,

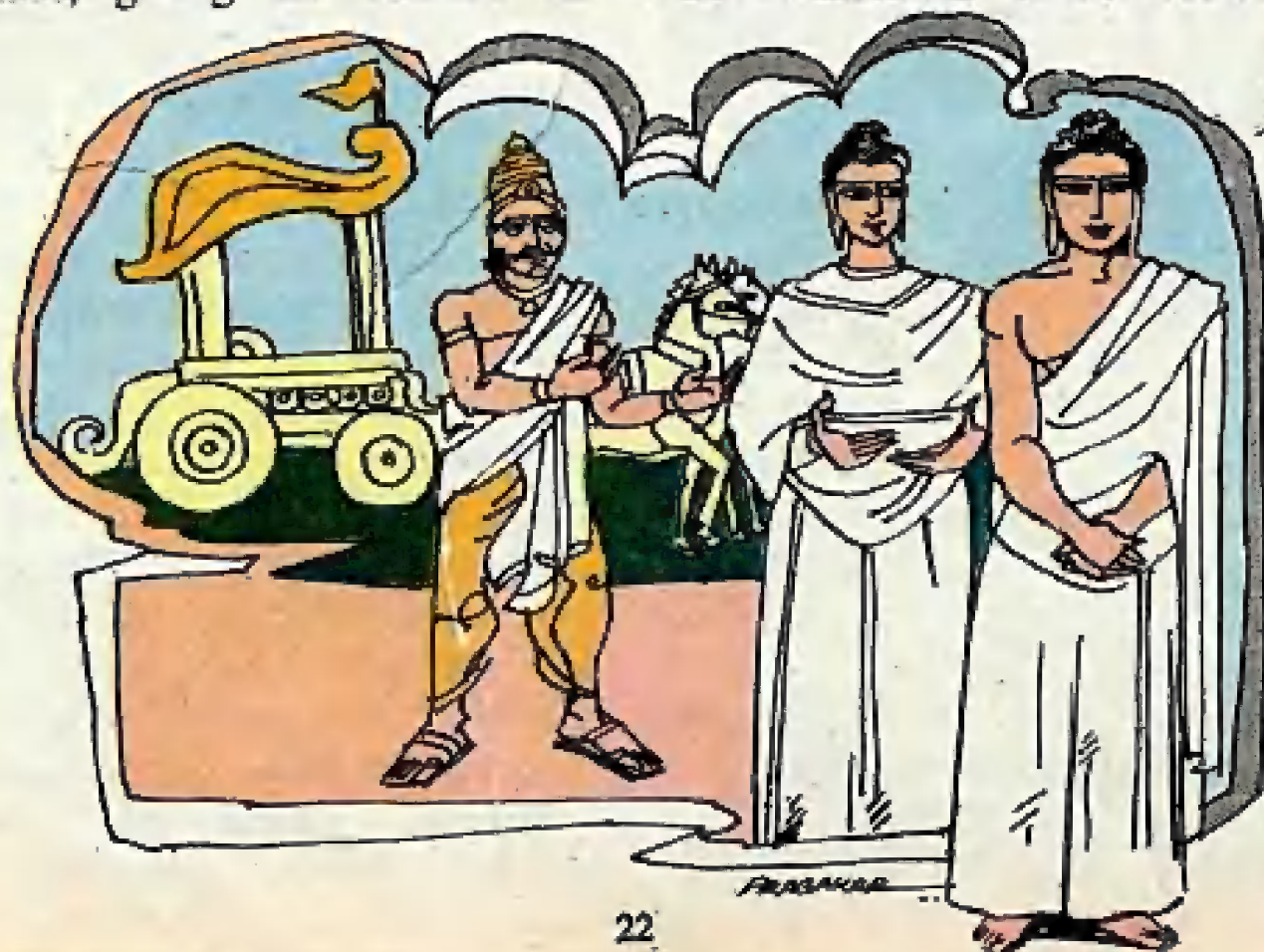
when he visited Kapilavastu at the repeated request of King Suddhodana, his younger brother, Nanda, the son born to the king's second wife, was about to be married and declared as the crown prince.

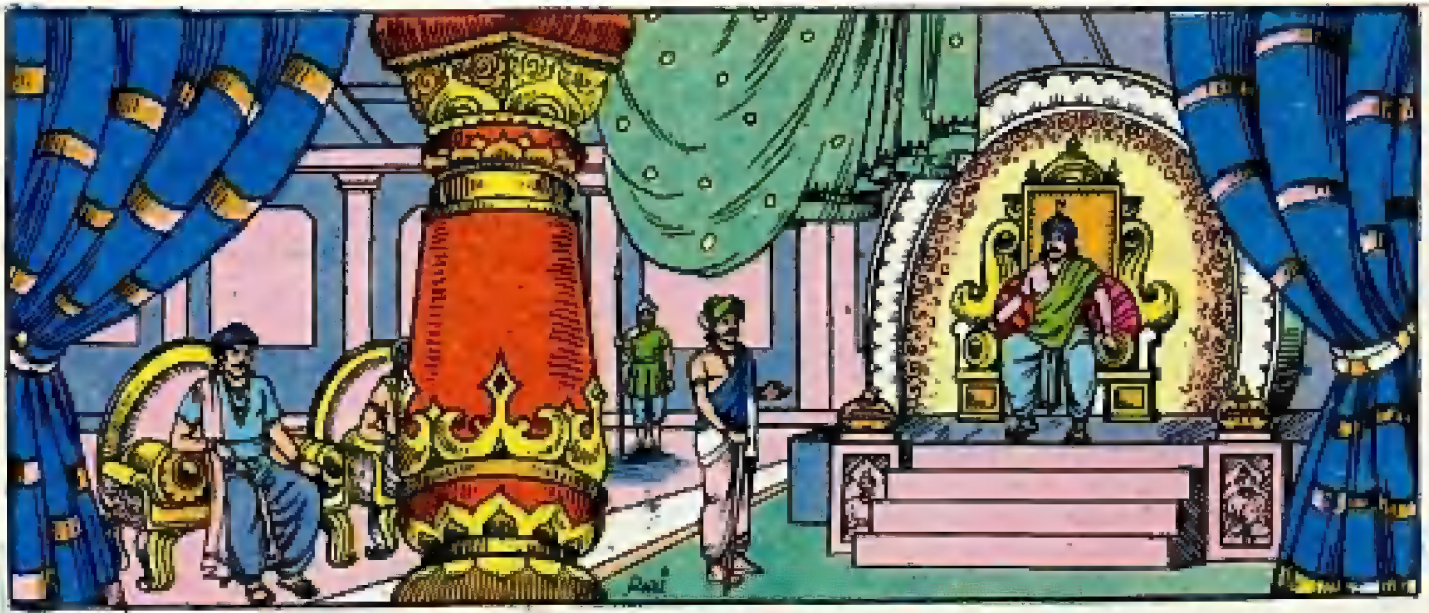
A little before the ceremony, Buddha asked Nanda to hold his begging bowl. Nanda held it with deep reverence. Buddha never asked it back and Nanda was in no mood to put it down. He followed Buddha to his camp and never returned to the palace. He became a disciple of Buddha!

For fortyfive years did Buddha wander from place to place, giving the seekers the

message of salvation. At last, at the age of eighty, while at Kusinara, he announced that he was about to leave his body. But till the last moment he went on answering questions from seekers. Only when he was satisfied that nobody had any more doubt about anything that he closed his eyes—and closed them for ever.

Soon Buddhism became a great religion. It spread all over India and its message reached countries far beyond. The Hindus looked upon Buddha as the ninth incarnation of Vishnu. Great indeed has been the influence of Buddha on the civilizations of the world.





TRIAL FOR THE TWO PRINCES

The king had two sons and they were twins. Prince Lalit was brave but rash. Prince Paresh was wise but shy.

"I do not know who should succeed me to the throne, Prince Lalit or Prince Paresh," the king uttered before his council of ministers during one of their meetings.

"Why, my lord, we have no doubt that it is Prince Lalit who should make an able king. Courage is the most essential virtue for a king and he has it amply," said one of the ministers. "True, true," said a few more ministers in his support.

"I don't agree with this view," said another minister. "It is wisdom which should be con-

sidered as the chief quality of a king. I have no doubt that Prince Paresh should be our choice for the throne," observed another minister and he too was supported by some of his colleagues.

"Why do you keep quiet?" the king asked his chief minister.

"Courage and wisdom both are great qualities. But what is important for us is to find out who between the princes has the capacity to protect the kingdoms," said the chief minister.

"How to find that out?" asked the king.

"He who can protect himself when faced with a difficulty can be trusted as capable of protecting the kingdom," answered

the chief minister.

It was decided that the chief minister should take the two princes on a journey and see how they fare when faced with problems.

The three went out before long, riding. As they were passing through a forest in the evening, a jackal emerged from a bush and stopped them and said, "Gentlemen, I was just looking for a human being to decide a quarrel between myself and my wife. We are going in different directions for hunting. We have a young son, which, I say, should accompany me. But my wife insists that it must

accompany her. Can any of you settle the dispute?"

"Why not," said the chief minister. He then looked at Prince Lalit and asked him to accompany the jackal and return after deciding the case.

Just then a wood-cutter appeared before them and said, "I have a dispute with my friend. Can you kindly settle it?"

"What is it about?" asked the minister.

"We two had come to an understanding that whatever food one of us found should be equally divided between us. Now my friend has brought a stick of sugar cane. But he demands



the lower half of it which is sweeter, on the argument that it was he who had found it!" replied the man.

The chief minister asked Prince Paresh to accompany the man and settle their dispute.

The minister waited on a mound. A moment later Prince Lalit returned, whistling merrily.

"Did you solve their dispute?" asked the minister.

"Of course, I did," replied the prince.

"How?" queried the minister.

"It was not difficult at all. The jackal and his wife both insisted on carrying their child with them. At once I cut the

little jackal into two and asked them to carry a part each. But foolish as they were, they howled at me and were ready to attack me. With one sweep of the sword I cut down both. Thus, I solved the problem with force and courage," replied Prince Lalit proudly.

Next moment Prince Paresh arrived on the mound.

"Could you satisfy the woodcutters?" asked the minister.

"I could, luckily," replied the prince.

"How?" asked the minister.

"It was simple. I cut the sugar cane with my sword from top to bottom into two halves. Both



of them got a share of the sweet lower part and were happy," replied Prince Paresh.

They mounted their horses and advanced through the forest. At one place they saw a murmuring brook with beautiful trees abounding in flowers near it. In moonlight the place looked charming.

"Wait for a while, human beings, wait!" a voice commanded them. Soon they saw two *gundharvas*—godly supernatural beings—approaching them.

"We do not visit this forest often," one of them said. "But I feel that the evening breeze here is cooler than the morning breeze. What do you human beings say?"

"But I feel that the morning breeze is cooler than the evening breeze. What do you

human beings say?" asked the other *gundharva*.

The minister looked at Prince Lalit.

"Both of you are wrong, for, the breeze is equally cool in the evening and in the morning," answered Prince Lalit.

The *gundharvas* looked very much displeased. They turned to go.


"Please wait a minute," said the minister and he looked at Prince Paresh.

"Both of you are right," Prince Paresh told the *gundharvas*, "for, the breeze is equally cool in the morning and in the evening."

The *gundharvas* were happy. They gave Prince Paresh two golden lotuses.

Needless to say, it was Prince Paresh whom the minister chose to succeed the king.





*New Tales of King Vikram,
and the Vampire*

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY!

Dark was the night and fearful was the atmosphere of the cremation ground. Not only did it rain from time to time, but also thunder shook the earth and lightning dazzled the horizon. Over and above that could be heard the weird laughter of spirits.

From the bushes around was heard the howling and moaning of jackals. A few yards away flashed Will-o'-the-wisp. When there was no noise, the silence proved even more fearful!

But King Vikram did not budge from his mission. The corpse on his shoulder, he began crossing the ground.

Suddenly the vampire that possessed the corpse observed, "O King, great is your courage. Most probably you will achieve your goal. But there are episodes to show that people have spurned the very reward for



which they have worked hard. Let me give you an example. That should divert your attention, from the pain of your labour."

The vampire went on: Ravi Verma and Roop Singh were two kings reigning over two neighbouring kingdoms. For generations the rulers of the two dynasties used to be each other's enemy. Often there were skirmishes between the armies of the two kingdoms.

People living in the frontier of the two kingdoms suffered due to the rivalry between the two dynasties. Ravi Verma was not happy about it. In fact he

strongly desired to end their enmity. But what could he do alone by himself.

King Roop Singh had a daughter—his only child. When she reached the marriageable age, Roop Singh convened a *Swayamvara* where many princes should gather and he who would prove his worth would win the princess' hand.

Roop Singh sent invitations to a number of princes through messengers. But he despatched his chief minister to invite Ravi Verma's son, Prince Chandrahas.

Ravi Verma felt honoured. He received the minister with great warmth. The minister hinted that his master was eager to put an end to the continued feud between the two kingdoms.

Ravi Verma happily agreed to send his son to Roop Singh's court. He dreamt of uniting both the kingdoms through his son's marriage with Roop Singh's daughter as Roop Singh had no son.

But Prince Chandrahas was not very enthusiastic about it. However, being an obedient son, he proceeded to Roop Singh's court as directed by his father. He was accompanied by a dear friend, Sudhir.

While riding through a forest, they were captured by a group of tribal people who led them to the presence of their chief. Chandrahas introduced himself to the chief and begged to be freed. But the chief explained that according to their custom, if they found an outsider in the forest on that particular day of the year, they must capture him and sacrifice him to their goddess. However, if the prince or his friend could defeat the tribe's chief wrestler in a single combat, then both could go their way.

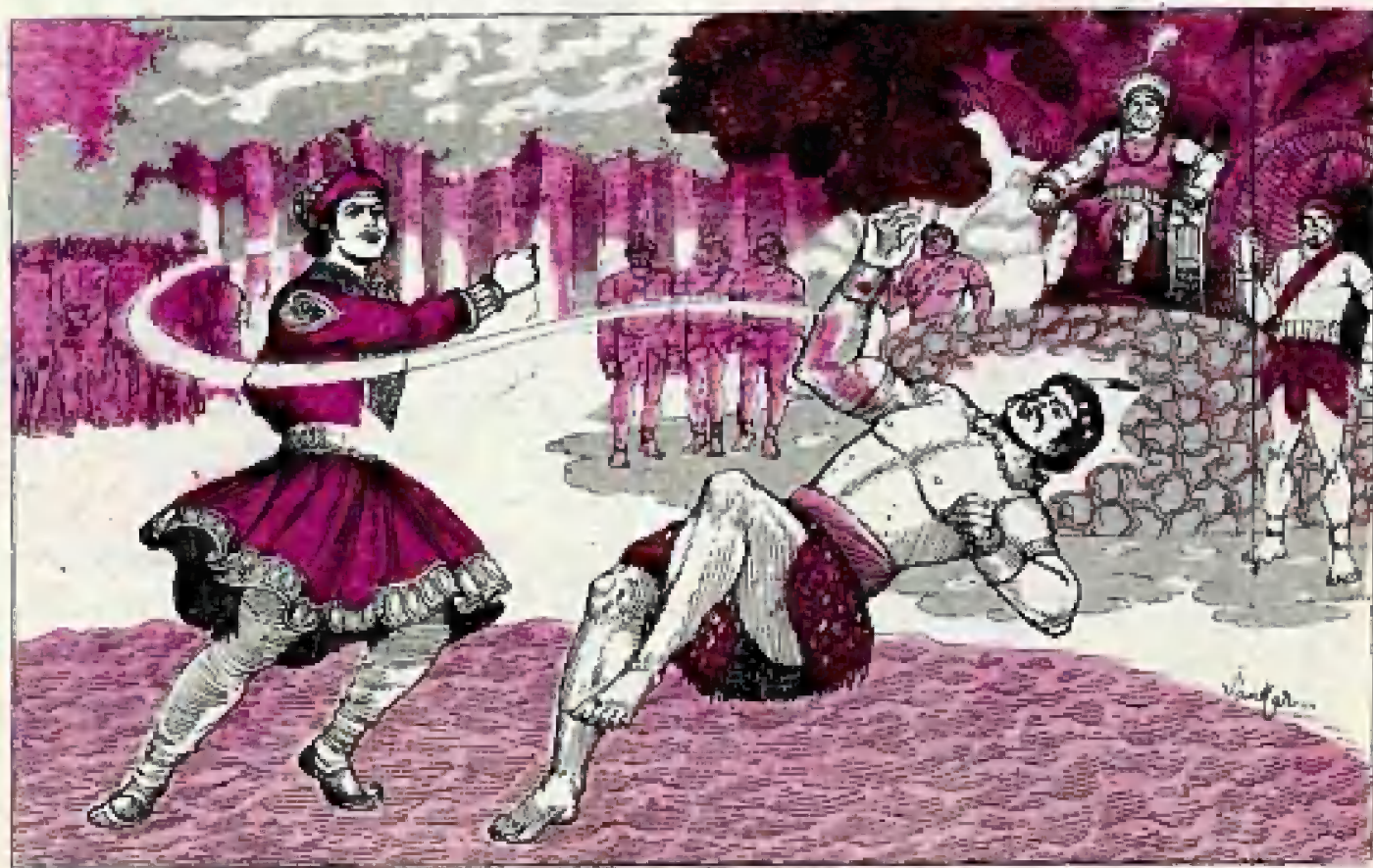
"I take up the challenge," said Prince Chandrahas.

The two friends were sump-

tuously fed. They were given a comfortable cottage to spend their night in. Nobody was posted to keep watch on them.

At midnight Sudhir proposed, "Hurry up. Here is a golden opportunity to escape. Our horses are kept nearby." "Never! The chief has not posted any guard on us because he trusts us. Why should we act like cowards? Let me wrestle. Let us see what is there in our luck," said the prince.

The wrestle took place duly. Chandrahas defeated the prize wrestler of the tribals. The chief was happy. He gave them two pieces of diamonds as gift





and bade them goodbye.

As expected, Chandrahas was received by King Roop Singh with a great show of affection. The king had arranged for competitions in wrestling, fencing and archery among the princes who had gathered there. One who topped all was to marry the princess. And it was Chandrahas who emerged victorious from all the trials.

King Roop Singh congratulated him. But he said, "Tomorrow you have to wrestle with Kamalketu. If you defeat him, you marry the princess. This is the last condition you are to fulfil."

Chandrahas asked several people about Kamalketu. But nobody could say who he was.

At midnight, Chandrahas woke up his friend Sudhir and said, "Hurry up. Here is a golden opportunity to escape."

Sudhir looked puzzled. "What do you say? You are sure to win the hand of the princess, because one with whom you have to wrestle in the morning seems to be an ordinary fellow. You defeated the ferocious wrestler of the forest so easily. You defeated all other princely candidates. And you have taken all these risks for marrying the princess. Why do you wish to forsake the reward when it is almost within your grasp?" Sudhir asked.

"My friend! I will explain my conduct to you after we have crossed this kingdom. There is no time to waste now," said the prince and both galloped away immediately.

The vampire paused for a moment and demanded, "O King, why did Chandrahas show such foolishness? If he had not cared to escape from the forest although his life was in danger there, why did he decide to escape from the kind King Roop Singh's palace? Why did

he lose the golden opportunity to win the princess? Answer my question if you can. If you know the answers but decide to keep mum, your head shall roll off your neck!"

King Vikram was ready with his answers: "Far from showing any foolishness, Chandrahas proved that he was truthful, courageous, clever and wise. As he was truthful and courageous, he refused to escape from the forest. As he was clever, he could understand what is there in Roop Singh's mind. As he was wise, he escaped.

"Roop Singh could have wished either friendship with the kingdom of Chandrahas, or to destroy him.

"If he really desired to have Chandrahas as his son-in-law, he should have announced his

decision as soon as Chandrahas won all the contests. But the very fact that he wanted Chandrahas to wrestle with a fellow whom nobody knew showed that he had something else in his mind. What could that be? Surely, it was to kill Chandrahas. Kamalketu must have been a seasoned murderer who would have flouted the rules of the game and killed Chandrahas. King Ravi Verma could not have complained as his son had chosen to wrestle! And once Ravi Verma's successor had been killed, it would have been easy for Roop Singh to defeat Ravi Verma and capture his land!"

The vampire, along with the corpse, slipped away as soon as the king had concluded his answers.





NO DISGUISE FOR NATURE!

A rich merchant of Kanchi founded a guest-house in the town. A Brahmin pilgrim visiting the city could stay there up to ten days. Over and above the shelter and the free food, the guest was given a rupee a day for meeting his small expenses.

In a village not far from the city lived Narayan Bhatta. He was not poor, but he was extremely greedy. "Why not I manage to live in the guest-house for a month? That should bring me thirty rupees, apart from three nice meals a day!" he thought to himself.

He grew a beard and dressed as a travelling mendicant and checked into the guest-house.

The man in charge of the

guest-house was Ramnath who was also the priest of the local Hanuman temple. He had placed an offering box on his table. While leaving the guest-house, the pilgrims put their contributions for the Hanuman temple in the box.

After a stay of ten days, when Narayan Bhatta received his allowance of ten rupees and was about to leave, Ramnath requested him to make a small contribution towards the temple fund. But Narayan Bhatta did not oblige him.

A few hours later Narayan Bhatta returned to the guest-house. But he had given up his beard. He checked in with a new name and stayed for a fresh

period of ten days. At the end of that period he realised ten rupees more and left the guest-house only to return again, this time shaving his head and assuming yet another name. He stayed for ten more days, completing a month.

He was very happy. He had successfully deceived Ramnath. He had also passed a good time. He decided to repeat the trick later.

But as he was about to leave after the third term, Ramnath took his hand under a firm grip and led him to the court of the local judge.

"This man has abused our hospitality. He should be punished for deceiving us under false names," Ramnath complained.

It was not difficult for the judge to find out the truth. Under the threat of punishment Narayan Bhatta confessed to

his cheating. He was heavily fined.

After the trial was over, the judge asked Ramnath, "Bhatta had taken to clever disguise. How could you recognise him?"

"It was because of his nature, my lord. He refused to contribute a paisa to the temple fund at the end of the first term of his stay. He did the same thing at the end of the second term. I was surprised that two such mean fellows should visit the guest-house one after the other. When Bhatta did the same thing even at the end of the third term, I grew suspicious and had a closer look at him. I was soon sure that it was the same man who had proved his nature thrice. Had he been a little generous only once, I would not have suspected him," replied Ramnath.





ALICE IN WONDERLAND

You must have seen and heard important people who have to keep engagements looking at their watches and grumbling, "Oh, dear! Oh, dear! I shall be too late!"

But when the little Alice saw a white rabbit with pink eyes taking a watch out of his waistcoat pocket and saying so, she naturally grew curious to follow the creature.

And following the rabbit, she was soon falling down down down into a hole, until she found herself on a pile of leaves.

She was soon in a hall with many locked doors around. To her great delight, she spotted a golden key to the smallest of the doors. She opened it which led her into a passage no bigger than a rat's hole. But through it could be seen the loveliest garden one could ever imagine.

Only if she could enter the garden and go near the cool

fountain! But the passage was too narrow for her. "Oh, how I wish I could shut up like a telescope!" she mumbles to herself. And soon she found a bottle labelled, 'Drink me'. She drinks and shrinks to the size of ten inches. But beneath the table is a dish sporting a label, 'Eat me' ! She eats. Next moment she is nine feet tall!

This experience of growing smaller and growing bigger visits Alice several times as she continues meeting a host of strange and queer creatures.

Inside a forest she meets the Duchess who has a fish-like servant. The Queen of Hearts sends an invitation to the Duchess through a frog-like messenger. Alice has to hold the infant child of the Duchess. Instead of crying, the babe begins to grunt and, turning into a pig, it slips into the forest.

Alice meets the Cheshire Cat grinning from the treetop. It was a cat which could appear and disappear at will and grin broadly and its grin could be seen even when the rest of the cat had disappeared. Once when the Queen got angry with it and ordered that it be beheaded, its head disappeared. The queen's order went in vain!

Alice also met the Caterpillar who smoked a hookah and contradicted whatever she said. She also met the Mad Hatter who was fond of making personal remarks and March Hare who offered her wine although there was none of it! There was also the Dormouse who fell into the teapot again and again, and the Mock Turtle

whose education consisted of Reeling, Writhing, and all the parts of Arithmetic such as Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision!

Alice challenged the Queen for her rash judgment on innocent creatures. The Queen and her tribe rushed at her. But they were only creatures of cards. However, what Alice took as flying cards were in fact dry leaves. She had fallen asleep on a riverbank, her head on her sister's lap, and had seen the wonderland in a dream!

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, by Lewis Carroll 1832-98) whose real name was C. L. Dodgson, was published in 1865 and has since continued to enjoy an unbroken popularity.



PATHWAY TO HEAVEN

In days gone by there lived a young man named Haridas in the village of Rampur. He had hardly anybody to call his near one. He worked in a shop during the day. He spent his evenings attending various functions here and there—a dramatic performance at a nearby village or a recitation of verses from the scriptures at some temple.

One evening he heard a speaker addressing a gathering before a temple. The speaker explained how comfortable it was to be in heaven. The speech charmed Haridas. He wondered why he should not depart to heaven which abounded in beautiful nymphs never tired of dancing!

Next day, while the speaker sat on the veranda of the temple, he met him and asked, "Will you be pleased to tell me how one can go to heaven?"

"Through piety, my boy. But do not bother about it. If you do your duty properly and remain honest and truthful in life, you will automatically attain heaven after your death," replied the speaker.

"Sir! What joy is there in this world? Is there no way to reach heaven quickly?" Haridas insisted on knowing.

"Perhaps there is. I have heard some people saying that those who sacrifice themselves in the Ganga on a certain auspicious day attain heaven straightway!" said the speaker in a lighter vein.

The speaker could have never thought that Haridas would take his comment seriously. But that is what Haridas did. The said auspicious day was not far. Haridas reached the Ganga the day before. At the crack of dawn on the auspicious day, he jumped into the river.

But he was puzzled to find himself not in heaven but in hell. He met Yama, the god of death, and said, "There must have been some error in judging my case. I should be sent to heaven, not to hell."

"Hell is the place for you, for you committed violence against yourself and killed yourself before completing the span of life granted to you by Providence," explained Yama. "However, because it is an auspicious

day, we pardon you. Return to earth and lead an honest life," added the god of death.

Next, Haridas regained consciousness and found himself beating the waters. He came ashore and returned home quietly.

The owner of the shop where Haridas served was a very kind man. Impressed by Haridas's conduct, he gave his daughter in marriage to him. Soon Haridas came to own the shop when his father-in-law decided to retire to a hermitage.

Haridas grew prosperous. Several children were born to him. He built a nice house for his family and made proper

arrangements for the education and welfare of his wife and children.

Then he thought to himself, "I have known all the happiness life could give. Now, nothing but the happiness of heaven can please me."

When the auspicious day came again, Haridas drowned himself in the Ganga.

But, again to his surprise, he found himself in hell.

"Why did you kill yourself before completing your work in life?" an irate god of death asked him.

"My lord! I have completed my work. I have done all I should have done for the welfare



of my family, while living honestly," replied Haridas.

"Who are you to decide what your duty is and when it was to be completed? Providence who gave you your life alone can decide when to put an end to it. Go back, you fool!" said the god of death.

Haridas regained his consciousness and returned to his family. Years passed. His sons and daughters came of age and he arranged for their marriage. Soon he had a brood of grandchildren. He was happy and proud. But he grew anxious too, thinking of the security of the growing family.

He expanded his business. He now took to such means for increasing his wealth all of which were not honest. He was determined to leave a lakh of rupees for each of his grandchildren.

But, one day, while playing

with his grandchildren, he suddenly felt a pain in his chest. Next moment he saw himself being led away into the world of the dead.

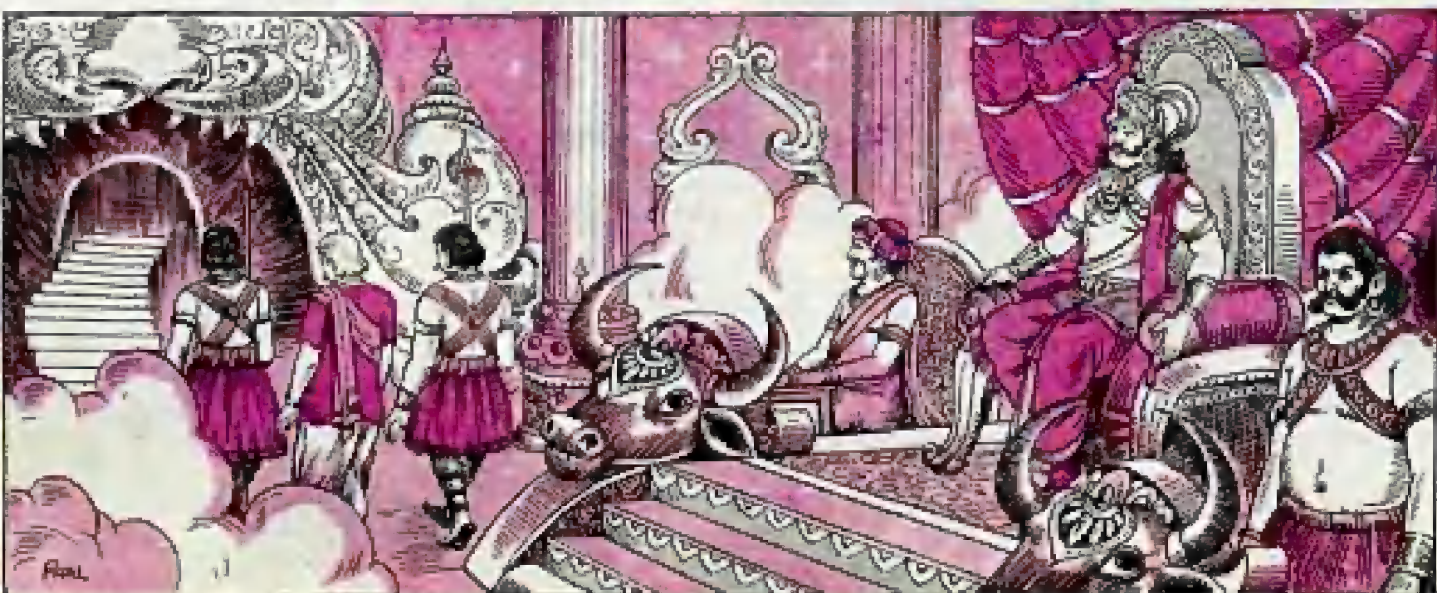
"There is some error in judgment, sir," he shouted the moment his eyes fell on the god of death. "I should have been allowed to continue in life for some more years."

"What!" uttered the god, "Is it not a fact that you had lost interest in life years ago?"

"That was my foolishness. I had been quite happy with life lately," explained Haridas.

But the god of death only laughed. His laughter convinced Haridas that he had no more chance of returning to life.

"Heaven would have been mine only if I had lived a just life when the opportunity was there with me!" he lamented in vain as he was shown the way to hell.





The World of Magic

THE MERCHANT OF SANDIP

Hiradutta, the prosperous merchant of Sandip, carried on trade with islands across the sea. He was well known for his philanthropy and compassion.

People of his land liked him very much. Even the king had a great respect for him. Hiradutta never boasted about his prosperity. On the other hand, whenever a man new to business sought his guidance, he gave it readily. In fact, many had become successful merchants under his guidance.

No wonder that such a wealthy man who also enjoyed a good reputation should arouse jealousy in some mean hearts. Foremost among such people

was Virdas, who too was a merchant, though not of the scale of Hiradutta.

Virdas tried to harass Hiradutta in so many ways. He spread false rumours about him and sent messages against him to other merchants who traded with him. But they were of no avail. Virdas, naturally, was very much disappointed.

Once Hiradutta prepared for a grand voyage to Suvarnadwipa, loading his ship with a variety of costly goods. Virdas was afraid that Hiradutta was going to make a great profit and upon his return he would be considered the richest man in the whole kingdom.

The wicked Virdas plotted



active again. Hiradutta's ship was again sunk by his men.

Great was the sorrow of Hiradutta. He concluded that Providence did not approve of his trade by sea. "It is not for me to launch a ship again. If I do so, it will sink!" he was heard telling several people. Both his health and confidence in his own efforts had been shattered.

His close friends and well-wishers tried their utmost to revive hope and enthusiasm in him. But their attempts failed. "I am an unlucky man," was his stock reply to all.

The King of Sandip heard all about Hiradutta's plight. The honest merchant's condition saddened him very much. He called Hiradutta to his presence and offered to finance him should he agree to go out on a voyage again. But Hiradutta's response was nothing encouraging.

After the merchant left, the king told the courtiers, "It is a pity that a wise and good man like Hiradutta should suffer from such a state of depression. Can't any of you do anything to revive self-confidence in him?"

The courtiers kept quiet.

to ruin him. He managed to plant some of his own men among the crew of the ship. Soon after the ship left the shore, these people made holes in the vessel and it began to sink.

All those who were on board managed to escape in time through smaller boats kept for use in an emergency, but the mishap came as a great shock to Hiradutta. With the ship was gone almost half of his wealth. However, consoled by his friends, he prepared for another voyage, pulling all his resources together.

But the cruel Virdas was

But Somnath, the court-magician, stood up and said, "My lord, I can try if you allow me to."

The king was happy and he asked him to do whatever was necessary in the best interest of the merchant.

In the meanwhile, to demoralise Hiradutta further, Virdas had sent a false astrologer to him who pretended to study his horoscope and said that there was no chance of his luck changing for the better!

Somnath knew of this. He requested the court-astrologer to accompany him to the merchant's house. The court-astrologer assured Hiradutta that his life was about to enter a new phase of prosperity.

Hiradutta, no doubt, felt a little encouraged. But he could not think of going into the sea again. "That is out of the question," he declared again and again.

"But, sir, you know that I am a magician. I am ready to accompany you on your voyage and protect the ship from any possible catastrophe through my magic powers," Somnath said.

"How can magic alter my destiny?" Hiradutta muttered.

"My magic can certainly alter



your destiny. I am ready to prove it if you kindly pay a visit to my house," replied Somnath.

Hiradutta arrived at Somnath's house at the appointed hour. Somnath placed a glass of water before him and handed him over a needle.

"Will you please place the needle on the water so that it should float?" he asked.

Hiradutta placed the needle on the water. It immediately sank. Hiradutta tried again and again. But he could not make the needle float.

After a few minutes Somnath led Hiradutta into his dining

room for refreshment. While Hiradutta was still there, Somnath returned to his drawing room and wiped the needle thoroughly dry. He placed it on a small piece of wire-net and placed the wire-net slowly on the water. The wire-net sank; but the needle remained floating. Somnath then removed the wire-net by the help of a thin wire-hook, without disturbing the water.

When Hiradutta re-entered the drawing room the needle was still floating. "This is amazing!" he uttered.

"Now you realise that I have the power to make a thing float which should normally sink. Don't you believe even now that my presence on board can ward off all catastrophes to the ship?" asked Somnath.

Hiradutta said that he thought

so. Soon he prepared for another voyage. That it was the king who bought the ship and the merchandise for him remained a secret. Some of the ablest detectives of the king boarded the ship disguised as members of the crew.

The ship had not gone far when the spies of Virdas, in darkness, began their work to sink it. Instantly the detectives caught them. They confessed to their crime and Virdas was exposed by them.

All the property of Virdas was confiscated, for, he had sunk two ships of Hiradutta.

When Hiradutta realised that his ships sank through human mischief only, he changed his attitude. With proper precautions he resumed his business and was soon a great merchant again.

Mr. A. C. Sorcer, Magician .





Veer Hanuman, in a few bounds, reached the mansion where Chandrasena remained as a captive. It was a charming building studded with precious stones and adorned with imaginative engravings and sculptures. Jewels set in them made the mansion luminous even in darkness.

Hanuman realised that the buildings of the Patala Lanka were no less magnificent than the buildings of Lanka. He was amazed at the wealth which the demons of both the regions had accumulated.

Those demons who were posted around the mansion were away, busy with the function at the sanctuary of their goddess. Nevertheless, the entrance was

guarded by a giant dragon.

As soon as the dragon saw Hanuman it began to breathe out fire and with a fearful yell rushed at him to swallow him up. Hanuman was not sure whether to give a fight to the monster or to avoid it somehow.

Suddenly he heard a cry. It was of a woman. He did not spend any more time reflecting on his course of action. He reduced himself to a very small size and dashed into the monster's mouth. He emerged on the other side, piercing its entrails.

There was no other obstacle on his way and he was soon inside the mansion.

It was all dark, but for the radiant gems here and there.



He heard the cry again, following the swishing sound of a whip.

In another bound Hanuman stood before Chandrasena's room. The door had been locked from inside. Looking through the window he saw the demoness Kantaki whipping Chandrasena and taking her to task, saying, "It was in his sheer foolishness that Mahiravana brought you here. You have proved a curse to us. Come on, confess who is it that is hiding inside the sanctuary. I will axe you to death if you refuse to confess. Or, maybe, I will hit upon a more painful devise to finish you."

And next moment the demoness was seen tightening her grip around Chandrasena's throat.

For Hanuman it was now time to act. He lengthened his tail and sent it through the window. Its end soon took hold of Kantaki's neck. The bewildered Kantaki at once let go Chandrasena. But she had been too cruel to deserve mercy. Hanuman's tail grew tighter around her neck and served as the noose to put an end to her life.

With a piercing shriek, the demoness, Kantaki, fell down, dead. Her shriek, followed by Hanuman's laugh, shook the mansion. But there was nobody nearby to hear the noise.

Next, Hanuman broke the door open with a single kick and entered the room and prostrated himself to Chandrasena. He told her all about his mission and begged of her to be given the secret of Mahiravana's life and death. Chandrasena was delighted to hear the name of Rama. Her face brightened up. She said, "O Hanuman, I will certainly tell you how to destroy Mahiravana and the brood emerging from his blood. But you must promise that

after Mahiravana is killed, you will bring Rama to me for a while."

Hanuman made the promise. Chandrasena disclosed to him the secret he wanted to know.

Hanuman lost no time in going in search of the mysterious place where the seed of Mahiravana's life remained secure. He flew through the clouds and then dived into the ocean. Fathoms below the water was a huge lotus, its petals made of dazzling flames. Hanuman prayed to the god of fire for protection and jumped into the wonderful lotus.

Soon, at the end of a tunnel, he stood before a dusky castle. Numerous snakes hissed and ghouls shrieked. But Hanuman roared at them and scared them away. Those who made bold to come near him received kicks and blows and retreated as far as they could.

He reached a cave-like area of the castle, crowded by ghosts. But the crowd dispersed at his approach. However, one being, terrible and grotesque, faced Hanuman and gave out a laugh intended at terrifying the visitor.

"Who are you? Get off my way!" ordered Hanuman.



The being laughed wildly and thundered, "Who am I? Well, I am the captain of ghosts and ghouls. But who are you? None other than Mahiravana has ever dared to enter this realm. Obviously, you are not Mahiravana. I wonder who you are."

"Captain of ghosts and ghouls, are you? In that case you should be wandering in the cremation grounds. What are you doing here? Give me way, I say. Otherwise I have to try my strength on you," said Hanuman.

"What! Try the strength of your puny self on me! Audacity! Well, well, let me see you



try! Come on!" challenged the being.

Hanuman clenched his fist and planted a blow on the being's chest. The being fell down and after a little while sat up and prostrated himself to Hanuman and said, "Now I know who you are. I had been reduced to this position under a curse. But I had been assured by Mahadeva that a blow from Hanuman will one day put an end to my curse. Great be thou, O Veer Hanuman!"

The being disappeared thereafter.

Hanuman entered the cave-castle. On a stone platform rested a bejewelled basket. Its

cover discharged flames. The moment Hanuman approached it, dazzling fire began to emanate from it. Hanuman tried his best to extinguish the fire by blowing into it. But that only increased the volume of the flames.

Hanuman prayed to the god of fire, saying, "O God! I am the son of your friend, the god of wind. Be kind to me."

The fire subsided and a voice was heard from amidst the flames, "O Hanuman, I wanted to make you aware of the fact that the casket contains five bees. You should have five mouths. Only then it would be possible for you to chew and kill all the five bees at a time."

Hanuman bowed to the god of fire and flew back to Rama and Lakshmana carrying the casket with him.

Rama and Lakshmana were uptill then busy fighting the host of Mahiravanas. Hanuman jumped forward and drawing the real Mahiravana's attention to the casket, said, "Look here, you king of the nether world, your life is in my hand. Better take refuge at Rama's feet.

Mahiravana looked scared. But he checked his emotion

and forcing a laugh, said, "You fool, the casket contains death for you. The moment you open it, you and your friends would be stung by the bees. Nobody can save you from the consequence. Better put the casket down."

Hanuman laughed. "Well, Mahiravana, you are welcome to perform whatever trick you know. You had stolen Rama and Lakshmana while they were asleep. That is crime enough for you to earn your death."

Mahiravana was taken aback at Hanuman's boldness. He shouted, "Kantaki! Where are you? Put Chandrasena to death without delay!"

Hanuman laughed again. "Mahiravana! Kantaki was no less clever than you. She had decided to kill Chandrasena long before you gave the order. But unexpected was the result of her action. She got killed herself!"

Mahiravana now realised the gravity of the situation. He went on shrieking madly and attacked Rama and Lakshmana with whatever weapon he got at hand. Also, he bled himself deliberately and profusely so that numerous new Mahiravanas emerged from his flowing blood.



Hanuman knew that there was no more time to waste. He prayed to God Mahadeva for giving him five heads. The prayer was instantly granted. He roared with his five mouths and opened the casket. Five bees came out of it at lightning speed and with a thunderous drone. At once Hanuman's five mouths snapped. The bees had been caught. Hanuman chewed and spat them out.

The numerous false Mahiravanas fell dead. But the original demon was alive, still fighting. Rama discharged a powerful arrow and beheaded him.

Flowers were showered from heaven on Rama and the five-

headed Hanuman. Gods, including Brahma and Mahadeva, appeared before Rama. Said Brahma, "O Rama, Mahiravana descended from Kalanemi, the infamous demon. It is nice that he is destroyed. It was with the Grace of Mahadeva that Hanuman succeeded in bringing Mahiravana's life-casket from the depth of the ocean."

Shiva blessed Hanuman and said, "You are great in courage, wisdom, sincerity and truthfulness. You alone could be the fit instrument for destroying the terrible Mahiravana. Whoever would pray to the five-headed Hanuman would be safe from any attack by ghosts, ghouls, etc."

Brahma advised Rama to crown Makaradhwaja the king of Patala Lanka.

Hanuman now gave up his five-headed form and prostrated himself to Brahma and Mahadeva. Before departing, the Gods assured him of the victory of Rama.

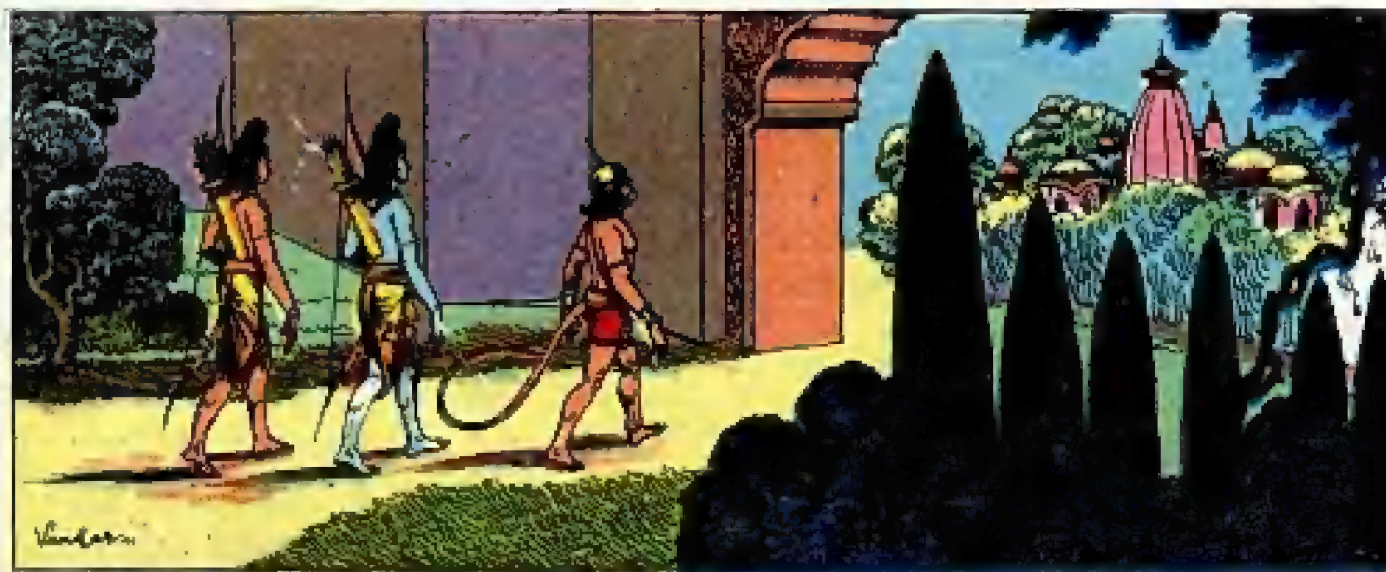
Rama lost no time in calling Makaradhwaja and arranging for his coronation.

Hanuman now told Rama, "My lord! Kindly help me to keep my word of honour. I could not have traced Mahiravana's life-casket without Chandrasena's guidance. I had promised to her that I will make you accept her hospitality for a while after Mahiravana's death."

Rama kept quiet for a moment and then said, "Well, then, let us go."

Hanuman was immensely pleased. He led the way.

CONTD.





THE TWO PARROTS

There was an old woman named Heera, who lived with her granddaughter.

The granddaughter, being a young girl, wanted to go out and play with the girls of her age in the village. But the old woman would never permit that. She would like the girl to remain confined to the house all the time.

The girl, naturally, was quite vexed with her grandmother. But she could not say anything to her face. However, when Heera was not at home, she would often blurt out, "Why doesn't the old woman die?"

Heera, of course, knew nothing of what the girl said behind her back.

Now, there was a parrot in the house which heard what the girl said time and again. One day, when Heera was feeding the pet in its cage, it said, "Why doesn't the old woman die?"

Heera was shocked. How on earth could the parrot have learnt such words? There was nobody in the house save herself and her granddaughter. When she was not at home, the granddaughter was left alone. The girl could not have said this, for, there was no one else in the house for her to talk to! It never occurred to Heera that the girl could have talked to herself!

However, she forgot about it soon. The bird too did not re-

peat her words for a few days — not at least in Heera's hearing.

One afternoon Heera sat in her house chitchatting with another old woman from the neighbourhood. Suddenly screamed the parrot, "Why doesn't the old woman die?"

The guest felt so much offended that she got up and left Heera's house immediately. Heera gazed at her pet in anger, for a long time. But the bird did not seem to care!

In the neighbourhood lived a learned pundit. So many people consulted the pundit for solving their own problems. Heera too went to him and narrated the problem she had with her parrot. She begged of him to cure her pet of its bad habit.

"That is not very difficult," the pundit assured her. "My parrot knows nothing but words

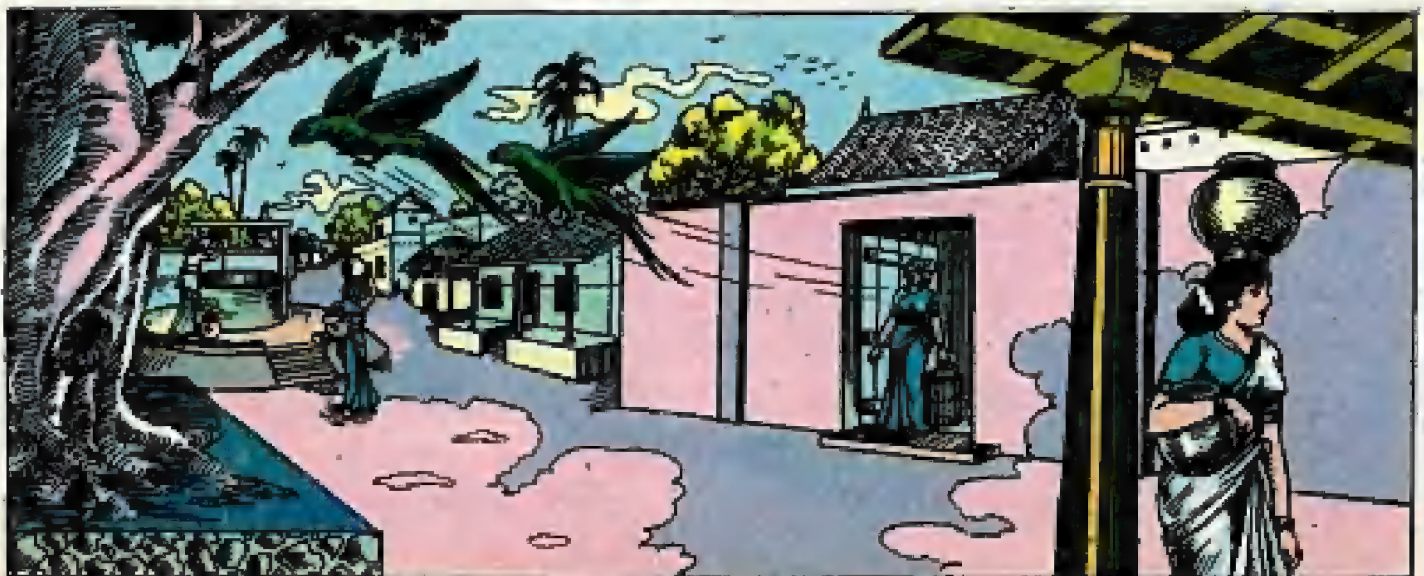
of wisdom. If you so like, you may take my parrot to your house and keep it with your parrot for a few days. No doubt, your parrot would pick up some nice phrases from my pet."

To Heera it seemed quite a bright solution to her problem. She carried the pundit's parrot with her and kept it in the same cage with her own parrot. This gave her a sense of relief.

But hardly had she shut the cage when her own pet screamed, "Why doesn't the old woman die?"

And at once replied the pundit's pet, "God willing, it should be so!"

The old woman, in a fit of anger carried the cage to her door and releasing both the birds, shouted, "Go and die wherever you like, you wicked ones!"





A MATTER OF LUCK

It was a bright morning. Rajan, on coming out of his bedroom, saw his wife, Mallika, returning from the garden with flowers for the family deity.

"It is your face that I see first this morning. I hope, it would be a lucky day for me," Rajan observed.

"Why not," commented Mallika. "It was the practice with my father to call me to his bedside when he woke up in the morning. He would open his eyes only when he was sure that mine was the first face he was going to see. He considered it a good omen."

Rajan was happy to hear this. He was full of hopes for the day.

On his way to the shop where

he was a salesman, he kept his eyes wide open so that he did not miss a chunk of gold if that would happen to lie on the road. Such a chance could not be ruled out, after all!

But no such chance befell him that particular morning. Next, he hoped that there would be brisk sale in the shop and a pleased boss would hand him over a reward. The situation, however, proved quite different. There was a setback in the business and for that the annoyed boss took all his employees to task.

Towards the close of the day Rajan saw his father-in-law's servant coming. "There is a festive time ahead and the fel-



low is certainly coming to me with an invitation from my father-in-law to visit his house," he thought to himself.

But the servant said that Rajan's father-in-law was preparing to go out on a pilgrimage and that he wanted a loan of five hundred rupees!

Rajan promised to send the money. But he felt extremely irritated at heart. The day had passed without a single event of good luck.

Dusk had set in when he was on his way back home. At the middle of the bazar he was suddenly stopped by an old woman.

"You are my lost Rajan, aren't you?" she asked eagerly.

Rajan started. The old woman could not be dismissed easily. Years ago, when Rajan lost his parents, it was this woman who gave him shelter and bestowed all love and care upon him. It was because she had lost her own son who resembled Rajan.

She had a few cows and an acre of land. With whatever she earned selling milk and vegetables, she tried her best to make Rajan happy. She had also got Rajan admitted in the school.

Five years later the old woman fell sick. She called Rajan to her bedside and said, "My son! I have nobody in the world excepting yourself. In case I remain bed-ridden for a long time, you will look after me, wouldn't you?"

Rajan nodded his consent. But the thought that he has to serve the old lady like her servant scared him. He left her village in the very evening, without telling her a word about his decision. Thereafter he took a job in a shop in the bazar near his own village and got married in due course. He had not seen the old woman for

many years.

Now the thought that the old woman had come to him seeking shelter worried him.

"Rajan! Don't you recognise me?" the woman asked again.

"What if I do? It is hard for me to make two ends meet for myself. How am I going to maintain you?" he grumbled and resumed walking.

"Listen, my son..." the woman said imploringly.

"Sorry. I can't help you. I have nothing to do with you," Rajan said with a gesture of finality and walked away.

Mallika greeted him with a smile. But Rajan complained, "Far from any good luck, one after another annoyance has visited me during the day. I narrowly escaped a great nuisance a minute ago. The old woman who had once given me

shelter had begun pestering me. But I had to dismiss her rather harshly."

"Don't say so! How could you fling the good luck that had come upon you?" shrieked Mallika.

"What do you mean?" Rajan asked with surprise.

"The old woman met me first. She confided to me that she had just found a buried treasure of ten thousand gold mohurs from her backyard. She had decided to give the wealth to you as she looked upon you as her son. She was getting impatient because you were late. That is why she walked into the bazar to meet you!"

Rajan felt like planting a hard slap on his own cheek. He realised that in his own meanness lay the cause of his misfortune.





FATHER AND SON

Two centuries ago, who in the town, was not afraid of Bhikhamdas, the bandit? The rich of the town gave him a regular monthly allowance so that he spared their wealth.

Bhikham knew many techniques of stealing. He did his work in such a way that no proof was available against him for the king's police to arrest him. Many thought that he knew some magic by which he could give everybody the slip. But, the fact is, the people feared him so much that they never came forward to do anything against him. So, he moved about audaciously, defying all! He was, no doubt, a great menace!

Rajesh was Bhikham's only child. Everybody knew that the boy was extraordinarily clever and smart. Bhikham himself had no doubt that a day would come when Rajesh would excel him as a thief. He taught Rajesh his art with great care.

The day Rajesh completed his sixteenth year Bhikham wished to take him out with himself on his nocturnal mission. But to his great sorrow and surprise, Rajesh said, "No, father, I will never help you in your vocation. I wish to lead a different kind of life."

"What!" Bhikham shouted with fury, "Are you such a coward? Do you think that mine is as inglorious vocation?"

We have been doing this since several generations. The king himself used to fear my grandpa. The wealthy ones respect me. But it seems you will bring all the glory to nought!"

"Father! The people do not respect you; they are afraid of you. But time is changing. It would not be possible to carry on your business smoothly any more. It is wise to take to some honest way of living," said Rajesh.

"Go and find out a way of honest living for yourself then!" roared Bhikham as he went out casting a look of contempt at his son.

Rajesh was a strong-minded boy. He decided to take up some work somewhere and prove to his father that it was possible for him to get away from the family tradition and yet make a living.

He went into the bazar. He had heard that the owner of a certain fruit-shop required an assistant. He offered himself to work for him.

But the shopkeeper smiled looking meaningfully at those who were around him who too returned his smile. Then the shopkeeper informed Rajesh curtly that he had no need of his assistance. Rajesh had the same





experience with some other shop keepers. He understood that nobody was willing to employ a thief's son.

Bhikham returned the next day and asked him, "Did you find some way to earn honestly?"

"No. People are not fools. They refuse to have a thief's son in their service," replied Rajesh and he added, "I must get to a place where nobody knows you."

"Go wherever you like. You will be obliged to return in a few days, starved and disappointed," said Bhikham.

"I may return, but not for the reasons you say. I will

return the day you need me. I still insist that it is wrong to plunder others for our own comfort," answered Rajesh. He then bowed to his parents and left.

Bhikham felt extremely sad as soon as Rajesh left him. He did not eat well. Nor could he sleep properly. His wife's condition was worse. Bhikham had to bear the impact of that too.

A few days passed. The people of the town got the impression that Bhikham's nature had completely changed. He was no more interested in plundering others' houses. The rich sighed with relief.

One night the house of a rich merchant was burgled. A big amount of cash was stolen. Bhikham was taken aback. Who dared to burgle a house that was under his jurisdiction? He went to survey the merchant's house. But the merchant told him rudely, "What brings you here again in day time?"

Bhikham understood that the merchant suspected him as the thief. He tried to convince the merchant that he had nothing to do with the theft. But the merchant did not seem to believe him.

Soon thereafter three or four other houses were burgled. Bhik-

ham realised that unless he caught the new thief, people would continue to think that it was he who was doing the mischief.

Bhikham roamed about in the town throughout the night in a bid to catch the new thief.

As days passed and he failed to nab the thief, he felt depressed. And, as a climax to his plight, one morning, returning home after a watchful night, he found that his own house had been looted. His wife had been left bound and gagged and the entire wealth he had accumulated over the years had gone.

Some people came to show him sympathy. But Bhikham could feel that all were happy at his misfortune. He had given sorrow to so many people. It is only natural that they now rejoiced at his sorrow.

For several months Bhikham had not gone to realise his monthly allowance from the rich ones. Now, losing everything, he met them and demanded his allowance. But they ignored him, saying, "Enough is enough. Do not expect us to remain cowed down forever."

There was a time when the people feared him as if he was a tiger. But now they pooh-



poohed him! Bhikham was bewildered.

It was humiliating to live in that town. One day he left the town with his wife. In the outskirts of the town he suddenly met Rajesh. Father and son embraced each other. Then Bhikham narrated to Rajesh all that had happened to him.

"There is no cause for worry, father. Come to my house. We will live happily and honestly," said Rajesh.

"But I do not understand how the very people who feared me so much in the past are now so rude to me!" said Bhikham.

"Father! Why should they fear you when they know that you were losing interest in your dreaded work? And if the rich must pay the monthly allowance, they should now pay it to the new thief, who was a

greater menace. Why should they pay it to you?" Rajesh explained.

Bhikham sighed and nodded.

"Father! I had warned you that we could not continue our family tradition forever. Did you see how you had to lose all you had to a new thief?" asked Rajesh.

"You are right. But I wonder who that clever new thief is," said Bhikham.

"Who but your son!" confessed Rajesh.

"You!" exclaimed Bhikham.

"Yes, father. I wanted to prove to you that it was not on account of cowardice that I refused to go stealing. However, I am going to return the wealth I have stolen to their owners. The only wealth I will keep is what I have stolen from you," Rajesh said laughing.





THE BURGLAR'S PRAYERS

Jagusingh, the burglar, bowed to the deity of the local temple whenever he went out on his mission and said, "Let me be successful in my work, O Lord!"

But one night he was caught red-handed while stealing from a merchant's godown. The merchant's servants gave him a severe beating.

Jagusingh, on his way back home, looked at the temple and said angrily, "How could you let me down, O Lord? My faith in you is shaken!"

After a day or two a certain holy man, accompanied by his disciples, came to camp in the village. The villagers showed him great respect. Jagusingh thought that the holy man must be as powerful as a god. Instead of going to the temple, he went to the holy man every night and

said, "Bless me so that I am successful in my mission."

The holy man blessed him.

One evening Jagusingh heard that the holy man was on his way to the landlord's house for performing some rite. He at once met the holy man and obtained his blessing for his night's mission.

And Jagusingh decided to burgle the same landlord's temple at night. Accordingly, he approached the temple at midnight when all was quiet.

Jagusingh entered the temple stealthily. But he was puzzled to see the holy man relieving the deity of all the jewellery. The holy man gave a start when he saw Jagusingh, but he checked himself and whispered, "O my dear devotee, I knew that you will appear here. In order to

spare you the trouble, I have already taken out the deity's ornaments. Take these."

Jagusingh received the ornaments and hurriedly left.

While passing the village temple, he told the deity, "The holy man not only protects me, but even assists me in my work. But what about you? You are a good-for-nothing deity!"

Needless to say that the holy man was a bandit in disguise. He had handed over the deity's jewellery to Jagusingh in order to avoid a confrontation. But no sooner had Jagusingh reached his house than the holy man's disciples pounced upon him and snatched away the bundle of jewellery from him.

Early in the morning, before leaving the landlord's house, the holy man disclosed to his host, as if through his super-

natural powers, that it was Jagusingh who had burgled the temple. The landlord's servants soon caught hold of Jagusingh and dragged him to the landlord's house.

While crossing the temple, Jagusingh prayed to the deity, saying, "Save me from the crisis, O Lord, and I will give up stealing!"

Jagusingh had hardly reached the landlord's house when the king's sepoy's arrived there and reported that a notorious gang of bandits, disguised as holy men, had been captured and the jewellery stolen from the landlord's temple had been found with them.

Jagusingh was allowed to go. He straight went to the temple and said, "Great indeed is your kindness, O Lord. Who but you could have saved me?"

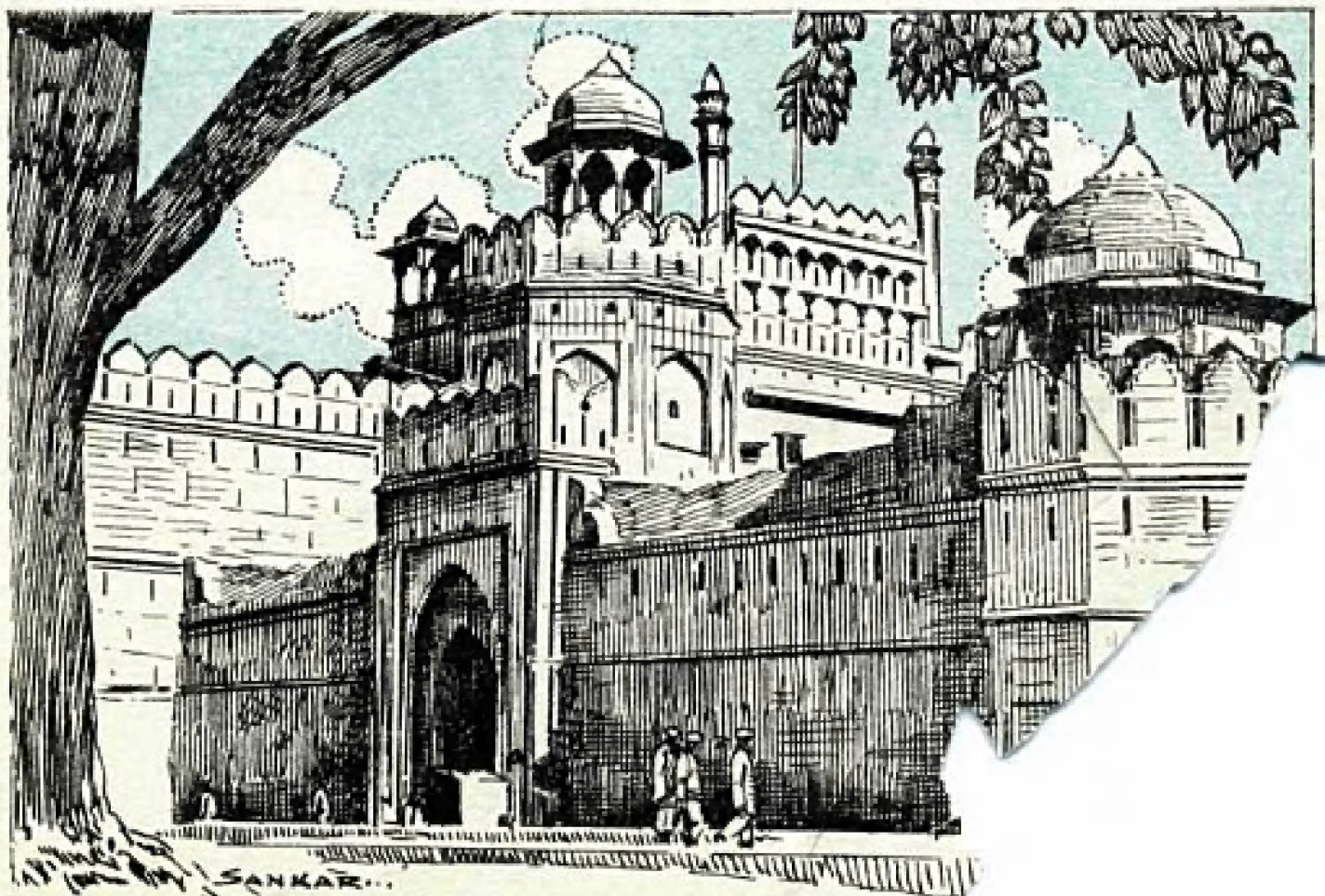


THE RED FORT OF DELHI

On the bank of the river *Yamuna*, in Delhi, stands the historic Red Fort—*Lal Killa*. One of the grand Moghuls, Emperor Shah Jahan, was its builder. He spent much of his time in this magnificent palace after he transferred his capital from Agra to Delhi in 1648.

The fort has two halls, *Dewan-i-Am* and *Dewan-i-Khas*. The latter was so richly decorated that an inscription in it read: "If there is a blissful heaven on earth, the same is here, here!"

The Red Fort is a great attraction for visitors to Delhi. Besides, it is still used for ceremonial purposes. On the Independence Day, the Prime Minister of India addresses the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort.



A PERFECT BABEL

The people of Babylon planned a big city and decided to build a tower at its centre. The tower was to be high enough to reach the skies—a monument to their skill and power.

They all spoke one language and that kept them united. But suddenly it so happened that they began speaking different languages. As a result, nobody understood the other. All one could hear inside the tower under construction was a great noise. Neither the city nor the tower could be completed. The people scattered in different directions, deserting Babylon.

“Babel” means confusion. In a gathering where a great confusion prevails because those present hold on to their own views or refuse to understand others, we say, “It was a perfect Babel!”





LET US KNOW

Who began the Olympic Games, and where?

Wilfred, Madras; Rajendra S. Kharnar, Aurangabad

The origin of the Olympic games is not certain. However, from the available records, it seems to have begun in Greece in 776 B.C. It continued, at the interval of four years, till A.D. 393. It was stopped, when Greece lost her independence, under the order of the Roman emperor, Theodosius.

The event received its name either from Olympia where it originally took place, or from the god Jupiter Olympius, to whom the games were dedicated. According to a legend, Jupiter himself had begun the games, long ago, after his victory over the Titans.

At the beginning, the competition was restricted to a race in which only the Greeks could participate. But soon more events were added and the time was extended to a week. Participants also came from the various colonies of Greece.

As competitors, kings and commoners were equally treated. The winner was presented with a simple olive branch; but he became a national hero, his glory sung by bards and his figure immortalised by sculptors.

After a lapse of centuries, the Olympic games were revived in 1896 on the initiative of a French scholar, Baron Pierre de Coubertin.

A stadium was built in Athens for the purpose and the King of Greece presided over the great event in which 13 nations participated.

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CHOOSE A TITLE AND WIN A REWARD

(You are invited to choose a title for the following story and write it down on a post card and mail it to 'Story-title Contest', Chandamama, 2 & 3, Arcot Road, Madras 600 026, to reach us by the 20th of September. A reward of Rs. 25.00 will go to the best entry, which will be published in the November issue. Please do not use the same card for entering the photo-caption contest.)



"This is the kind of soil on which cabbage should grow well," said Rajan pointing his finger at the acre of land.

"Nonsense," said Kishan, "I know the nature of this soil and I can tell you that this is most suitable for growing potato."

"You are a blockhead," said Rajan.

Kishan, instead of replying with words, planted a strong blow on Rajan.

Soon they were locked in a fight, both bleeding profusely. After minutes a group of passers-by separated them and inquired about the cause of their dispute and learnt it.

"Well, whether it should be cabbage or potato should be decided by the owner of the land. Who between you owns this land?" asked the leader of the passers-by.

Rajan and Kishan looked at each other and confessed, "None of us. We do not know who the owner is!"

The gentleman sighed and told his companions, "Remember this, friends, most of the disputes and quarrels in this world belongs to this category."

Result of Story Title Contest held in July 1967

The prize is awarded to :

Mr. B. G. Shashidhar,

24, 4th Block 'N', Rajaji Nagar

BANGALORE 560 010.

"PRODIGY OF PARS"